PARKS

A new policy for Nova Scotia

1988

Nova Scotia

The parks, beaches, wilderness trails and waterways of Nova Scotia are an important recreation resource. An integral part of the quality of life that we enjoy, they provide opportunities for outdoor recreation activities for hundreds of thousands of Nova Scotians and visitors to our province.

To ensure that these great natural resources are maintained and enhanced, they must be protected, wisely managed and further developed for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

To achieve this goal we have, in consultation with Nova Scotians from all walks of life, developed a policy that responds to the present needs and future concerns and objectives of Nova Scotians who have a unique appreciation and respect for our traditional and valued quality of life. It is a policy that also recognises and addresses the tourism potential of parks and recreation.

The New Policy ensures the continued maintenance, enhancement and expansion of our parks system. It also ensures that important heritage sites, beaches, trails and waterways will be recognized, preserved and maintained. Most important, it gives Nova Scotians the opportunity to provide input and advice as we develop and implement parks and recreation strategies for the benefit of present and future generations.

This new Parks Policy provides the guidelines and mechanisms that will enable us to achieve that objective.

As we embark on implementation of the new policy, I urge all Nova Scotians to recognize and appreciate the value and importance of our parks and outdoor recreation resources. Use and enjoy them often, share them with others and, above all, treat them with great care and respect.

Jack MacIsaac,
Minister of Lands and Forests

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PARKS:
OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS

1

Nova Scotia is noted for its scenic beauty and colorful history. These natural and cultural attributes attract thousands of visitors each year and are important ingredients in the **special quality of life enjoyed by Nova Scotians**. This New Policy is designed to provide **quality outdoor recreational opportunities for present and future generations** and to conserve Nova Scotia's outstanding heritage resources in provincial parks, trails, recreational waterways, and beaches.

This New Policy for parks is the third phase of an ambitious policy review process, initiated in 1986 with the release of a new Forest Policy and followed in 1987 by a new Wildlife Policy. It is also consistent with the thrust of the Province's program planning process initiated in 1986. It gives substance to strategic priorities of government relating to long term planning for environmental protection and natural resource management, as well as the co-ordination of government activities to enhance economic and social benefits.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2

Outdoor activities and the enjoyment of the natural environment are highly valued by Nova Scotians and visitors to our province. This New Policy is designed to provide the land base, infrastructure and services to meet the outdoor recreation and heritage protection needs of Nova Scotians well into the 21st century.

Specifically, this New Policy is directed towards:

- Providing more and varied opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation experiences in attractive natural settings.
- Preserving unique, rare or representative elements of the natural environment and scenic landscapes.
- Providing readily accessible opportunities for exploration understanding and appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage.
- Providing improved amenities for the travelling public.

POLICIES FOR PARKS

3

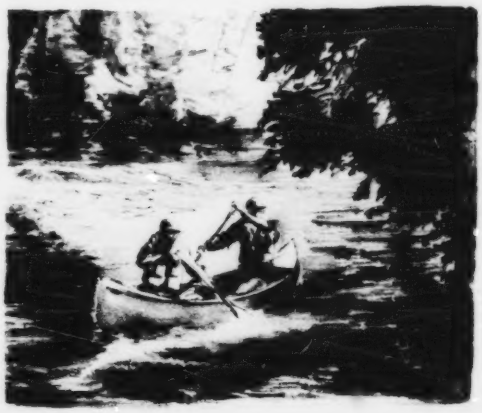
Achievement of these goals and objectives will require coordinated development of a high quality system of parks, recreational trails and waterways, beaches and wilderness areas incorporating distinctive natural features and landscapes, dedicated to present and future generations of Nova Scotians. Special emphasis will be placed on providing a wide range of **outdoor recreational opportunities accessible to all Nova Scotians** and available to tourists and visitors. Preserving the integrity of the natural environment will be an overriding theme.

The following policies will guide the Government of Nova Scotia in achieving these objectives.

Provincial Parks

Provincial Parks offer stimulating and wholesome outdoor experiences in attractive natural settings. They also provide an effective means of protecting important landscapes and sensitive environments.

This New Policy will emphasize the establishment, development and management of a **wide range of parks and parks facilities**, equitably distributed throughout the province and **dedicated in perpetuity to all Nova Scotians.**



This New Policy will provide for:

- Facilities that more effectively meet the needs of larger urban centres and that are responsive to the requirements of smaller communities and local organizations.
- Improved attractions for tourists and visitors including wayside stops, scenic viewpoints, rest facilities, and related services and amenities for the travelling public.
- Park opportunities and facilities that recognize the needs of senior citizens.
- Facilities that are more accessible to disabled people.
- Protection and interpretation of significant natural sites and heritage resources.

Recreational Trails and Waterways

Future outdoor recreational needs require new concepts and new initiatives that complement and enhance the parks program. Linear parks or corridors such as trails and waterways are increasingly valued for recreational purposes.

This New Policy will be directed towards:

- Identification, designation, development, and management of high quality recreational trails and waterways catering to the needs of a wide variety of users, and linking parks and other elements of the outdoor recreation system.
- Utilization of abandoned railways and other rights-of-way for this purpose where feasible.
- Participation in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.
- Establishment of a provincial program to conserve and manage selected rivers and waterways.

Beaches

Nova Scotia's strong association with the sea conveys an image of accessibility and enjoyment of the ocean shoreline. Access must be maintained and beach resources must be protected. This New Policy will conserve this important element of our identity through the **protection of beaches and associated dune systems** located outside provincial parks.

The Government of Nova Scotia will:

- Identify and designate beaches requiring protection and regulate activities to control destructive practices and management problems.
- Evaluate beach protection and management requirements and implement appropriate strategies to control and protect beaches and beach dune systems.
- Provide facilities and services and incorporate beaches into provincial parks where feasible.

Crown Land

Crown lands outside provincial parks afford various opportunities for recreational use. They contain attractive wilderness areas as well as old growth forest stands and other rare plant communities, high quality wildlife habitats and other significant heritage resources. In keeping with the Forest Policy of 1986 and Wildlife Policy of 1987, **Crown lands management will be planned to accommodate recreation and conservation objectives.**

Specifically, the Department of Lands and Forests will:

- Integrate outdoor recreation and conservation considerations into the forest management planning process for Crown lands.
- Encourage responsible recreational use of Crown lands.
- Protect Special Places, ecological reserves, and other unique or rare resources on Crown land in consultation with the Nova Scotia Museum.
- Develop and implement an effective administrative framework for campsite and recreational leases on Crown land.

4

The New Policy will require innovative approaches and improved mechanisms for planning, developing, managing and conserving recreation and heritage resources.

Resource Inventories and Planning

A comprehensive and progressive process to assess the need for parks, trails, and beach access and to evaluate opportunities for site access and acquisition, designation, and facility development is clearly necessary.

The Department of Lands and Forests will:

- Document present and future outdoor recreation and conservation needs in cooperation with other departments and agencies of government.
- Inventory outdoor recreation resources with particular emphasis on high quality sites including trail opportunities, rivers and waterways, beaches and wilderness areas.
- Analyse and evaluate available resource information utilizing the framework contained in the ***Natural History of Nova Scotia***.
- Prepare suitable strategies and plans for designation, development, management and protection.

Providing the Land Base

Lands and waters with suitable attributes for park development, trails, waterways, and beach access, or resources requiring protection are clearly limited as to quantity and fixed as to location. While Crown lands will be the primary focus for future needs, access to other lands will also be necessary in future. In keeping with the process outlined above, the Department of Lands and Forests will **identify priorities for designation or development** and will:

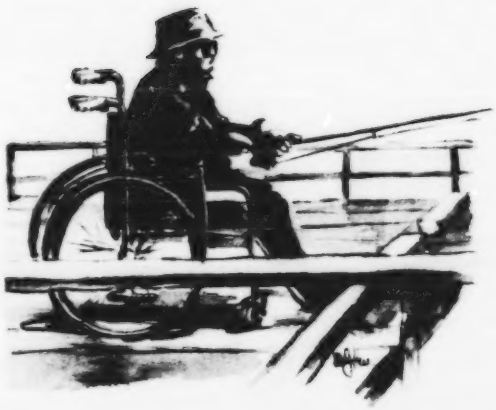
- Utilize existing Crown lands wherever possible.
- Enter agreements with private landowners and municipal agencies relative to development of trails and recreational waterways and the protection and management of beaches.
- Purchase other lands as required.

Park Classification and Zoning

Greater diversity will characterize the **Provincial Park** system in future. In recognition of this and to facilitate planning, development and management, a **classification regime and land-use zoning system** will be established.

The Department of Lands and Forests will:

- Implement a park classification system incorporating the following categories: wildland parks, natural heritage reserves, historic parks, natural environment parks, outdoor recreation parks, wayside parks, wildlife parks, and park reserves.
- Establish and incorporate a park zoning system in the management of Provincial Parks to distinguish intended land uses including: environmental protection zones, resource conservation zones and recreational development zones.



Services

Parks and related developments must be **responsible to user needs and accessible and usable by all Nova Scotians.**

The Department of Lands and Forests will:

- Implement standards and provide facilities and services that compare favourably with those in neighbouring jurisdictions.
- Provide facilities and services to encourage the use of parks by all age groups, including schools and other educational institutions.
- Encourage park use by disabled people by providing accessible facilities.
- Provide bilingual signs in parks adjacent to Acadian communities.
- Provide a wide range of recreational facilities as well as essential services such as central washrooms and showers where required.
- Encourage park use by community organizations and other groups.
- Cooperate with the Sport and Recreation Commission and other departments and agencies of government in the development and delivery of park user programs.

Complementing the Tourism Industry

The New Policy will **complement and support private sector initiatives** catering to the needs of tourists in Nova Scotia.

The Department of Lands and Forests will:

- Establish destination parks that will attract visitors and encourage extended visits.
- Develop park facilities, roadside rest areas, scenic viewpoints and other services along identified tourist routes.
- Develop and manage facilities that complement local, regional, and provincial tourism objectives.

Camping and the Private Sector

Campgrounds in selected **Provincial Parks** are an **essential complementary** component of this overall strategy.

The Government of Nova Scotia will:

- Emphasize the distinctive role of camping in parks by providing campgrounds where necessary to facilitate enjoyment and appreciation of larger park developments.
- Establish and maintain a fee structure for Provincial Park campgrounds that reflects those charged by the private sector and the level of service provided.
- Cooperate with the private sector in research, marketing and promotion of camping in Nova Scotia.
- Strengthen the complementary relationship between the park system and privately owned campgrounds.

Information, Interpretation and Promotion

Nova Scotians need to be well informed regarding their outdoor recreational resources. Emphasis will be placed on the preparation and distribution of appropriate materials and on interpreting the natural attributes incorporated in parks, trails, waterways, and beaches.

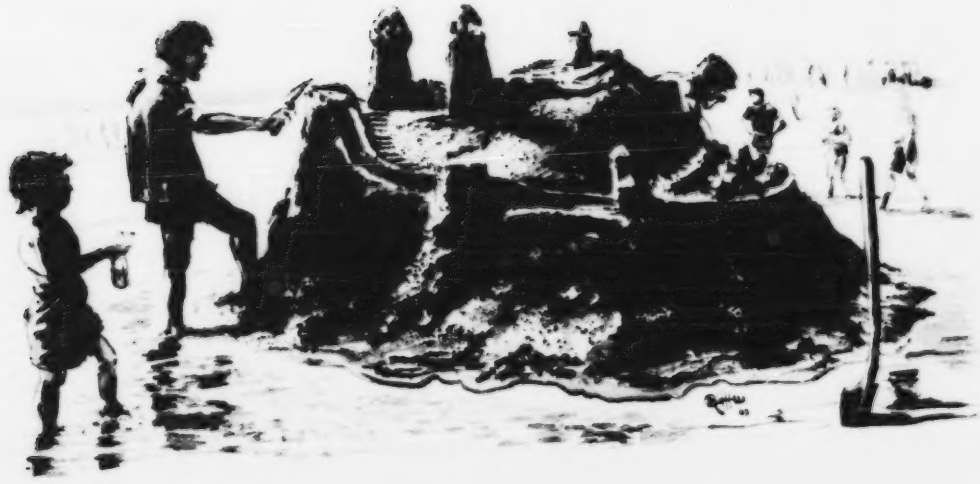
This requires that:

- The Department of Lands and Forests **establish interpretative programs** and facilities to enhance appreciation and understanding of various resources and prepare information brochures and other materials through the Department's Extension Services Program.
- The Department of Tourism and Culture **market and promote parks and related resources** as tourist attractions.

Consultation and Cooperation

Parks and related outdoor recreational resources reach a broad range of interests. For effective consultation and cooperation in future, the Government of Nova Scotia will:

- Appoint a **Parks and Trails Advisory Council** to advise the Minister of Lands and Forests on programs relative to Provincial Parks, trails, recreational waterways, beaches and other recreational resources.
- Provide for **public input** in the planning and management of individual parks, trails, beaches, and other recreational resources.
- Provide for **effective consultation and cooperation** among those departments and agencies of government having an interest in development, management and promotion of parks and related resources.

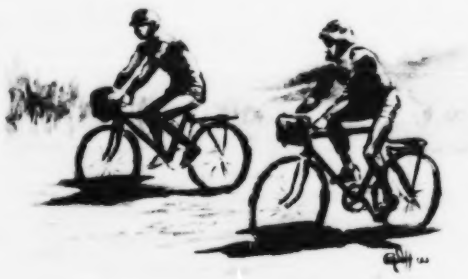


Funding

The Government recognizes that **new and innovative funding mechanisms** are required to meet the objectives of this New Policy.

The Government of Nova Scotia will:

- Provide financial resources to develop and manage a quality system of parks, trails, waterways, and beaches.
- Maximize the use of funding available under federal/provincial agreements and programs.
- Establish a Provincial Parks Trust Fund.
- Investigate innovative alternate funding sources such as tax incentives for the donation or contribution of the use of land.



IMPLEMENTATION

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Implementation of the New Policy is reflected in:

- The new Provincial Parks Act.
- The new Trails Act.
- Amendments to the Beaches Preservation and Protection Act.